



SENATOR
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E-Hardiman Herald



*Chair, Families & Human
Services Committee
Appropriations Committee:
Chair, Family Independence
Agency, Commerce Labor
& Economic Development,
Capitol Outlay,
Higher Education*

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Senate fighting for Michigan jobs

Senators will continue to concentrate on fighting for Michigan jobs and invigorating the state economy to create more employment opportunities. Already the Republicans' JOBS package has made significant progress in the Senate. JOBS — "Job Opportunities for Business Success" — is the nine-point plan proposed by Senate and House Republicans to jumpstart Michigan's economy and get Michigan residents back to work. With the holidays approaching, senators want to do everything they can to get people back to work and financially secure. To date, the Michigan Senate has acted on seven of the nine JOBS package components. The two remaining components will be dealt with when senators return. These components provide a tax incentive for small start-up businesses by exempting them from most taxes during their first two years of operation and implement forest management changes to protect the environment and create new job opportunities in Michigan's timber industry. The JOBS plan was introduced in October to help spur more manufacturing jobs and new small-business investment for more job opportunities, as well as provide incentives to expand the state's slow-moving economy.

Payment through EFT

Facing an almost \$1 billion deficit, state legislators plan to introduce two bills to help save the state some money. The legislation would require that all state government payroll and contracts entered into for goods and services by the state be paid by electronic funds transfers. Under the proposed laws, payment through EFTs would begin Oct. 1, 2004.

MIP law gets stricter for repeat offenders

Legislation was passed in the Senate recently that would amend the minor in possession law to give law enforcement and prosecutors additional tools needed to curb increasing underage drinking. SB 637 provides that upon successful completion of a probationary program for a first

MIP offense, the conviction will be dropped from the person's record. The bill will also allow judges the option of ordering limited jail time for repeat offenders who do not complete the court-ordered probation program. The bill now goes to the House for consideration.

Drunk Driving Prevention Month

December has been designated National Drunk Driving Prevention Month. With the holidays approaching, the Senate is reminding all constituents to practice safe driving tips to protect family and friends from the dangers of drunk driving. If you're going to drink, don't drive – instead choose a sober designated driver or call a taxi. In addition, remember that Michigan's drunk driving standard has been lowered to .08 blood-alcohol content and the penalties have been increased. Don't take a chance – don't drink and drive.

Brownfield clean-up bills pass Senate

Two bills allowing for the redevelopment of brownfield sites and increased job opportunities in Michigan passed the Senate. The bills authorize funds to be redistributed into a new revolving loan fund program and the existing grant program of the Clean Michigan Initiative. The money provides loans and grants to local units of government that have identified economic development plans and forged partnerships with the business community. The funds placed in the CMI revolving loan program would be repaid and, therefore, the program would be self-sustaining. This would reduce the need for large, new bond issues to support brownfield cleanup and redevelopment of existing contamination sites. Moving this money will allow local governments to use these funds more effectively while ensuring funding will be available for future generations.

MEGA extended

This week the Senate helped ensure that Michigan will continue to be competitive in luring new businesses and convincing current businesses to expand their operations in the state. Reauthorization of the Michigan Economic Growth Authority (MEGA) Act was overwhelmingly approved recently. It extends MEGA's Single Business Tax credit to Dec. 31, 2009, provides additional oversight tools and improves the credit-granting ability of the program.

MIRT legislation introduced

Legislation outlawing the purchase, possession and use of traffic-signal controllers was introduced recently. The two-bill package makes it illegal for unauthorized persons to sell, purchase and use the devices known as Mobile Infrared Transmitters and provides strict penalties for offenders. Someone using a MIRT resulting in a crash causing death could face felony charges with up to 15 years in prison and a fine of \$25,000. The devices emit a beam to

receivers installed at intersections and, when within a 1,500-foot range, change the light immediately from red to green.

Identity theft package approved

The Judiciary Committee unanimously approved the main parts of the identity theft package, forwarding a major initiative from Senate Republicans. During committee hearings, victims told senators how they had their personal information taken and used to open fraudulent loan, credit card and cell phone accounts. In one man's case, he was left to pay back thousands of dollars in loans and still has problems with his credit cards despite how he proved conclusively years ago that he wasn't responsible for the charges. Other victims reported problems in getting police to investigate such crimes because existing state law doesn't make clear which police agencies have jurisdiction. The package now goes to the full Senate for consideration.

Jobs "czars" proposed

The Senate Economic Development, Small Business and Regulatory Reform Committee approved creating two "czars" positions within the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to focus on small-business start-ups and creating and retaining manufacturing jobs. The move comes at a time when 25 percent of the manufacturing jobs lost in the United States have come from Michigan. The positions are needed to ensure the regulatory and economic development arms of all state departments are doing what they can for the manufacturing industry as well as entrepreneurs. The bills now go before the full Senate.

Phone cards donated to Military

In a special ceremony at the Capitol, members of the state Legislature presented the Michigan National Guard and Army Reserve with 3,000 phone cards that will be distributed to military members and their families. The cards, donated by DTE Energy and Verizon, are worth 60 minutes of domestic long distance.

New bill encourages farmers to secure anhydrous ammonia supplies

Michigan farmers who fertilize with anhydrous ammonia would be eligible for tax credits in exchange for putting in place certain security measures to prevent against theft under a bill introduced in the state Senate. Anhydrous ammonia, a nitrogen-based fertilizer product, is a key ingredient in the production of methamphetamine. The tax credit would begin in the 2004 tax year and could not exceed the farmer's tax liability.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The Hardiman Herald by Senator Bill Hardiman is designed to provide residents and organizations with a timely update of his activity in Lansing. If you have any questions or do not wish to receive this e-mail, please contact Senator Hardiman's office.

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